

Message Text

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SUBJ: SHANTUNG PLA LEADER PURGED

SUMMARY. YUAN SHEN-PING, SECOND SECRETARY AND TOP PLA COMMISSAR IN SHANTUNG, HAS BEEN PURGED. HIS REPLACEMENT IS THE FIRST CIVILIAN SINCE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION SELECTED TO BE SECOND SECRETARY IN A PROVINCE WHERE THE PARTY CHIEF IS THE REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDER. THUS YUAN'S PURGE PULLS THE MILITARY'S POLITICAL POWER IN THE PROVINCES ONE MORE NOTCH DOWNWARD. END SUMMARY.

1. YUAN SHENG-PING, SECOND SECRETARY IN CHINA'S SECOND LARGEST PROVINCE (70 MILLION PEOPLE) HAS BEEN PURGED AND REPLACED. IN MAY, SHANTUNG'S TACHUNG DAILY EDITORIALY ATTACKED CERTAIN
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"LEADING COMRADES" WHO WERE FAILING TO GRASP THE IMPORTANCE OF

THE ANTI-LIN CAMPAIGN (WR 21). ON JUNE 26, YUAN, WHO WAS ALSO THE RANKING MILITARY REGION POLITICAL COMMISSAR IN SHANTUNG, MADE HIS LAST PUBLIC APPEARANCE. IN AUGUST, BRITISH TRAVELING IN THE PROVINCE SAW A SEA OF BIG CHARACTER POSTERS, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE DENOUNCING YUAN FOR A SPEECH HE HAD GIVEN JULY 11. LATER LAST MONTH, THE TENTH CONGRESS DROPPED YUAN FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. FINALLY, A SEPT 4 TSINAN BROADCAST REVEALED THAT YUAN HAD LOST HIS PARTY POST TO THE CIVILIAN PAI JU-PING, WHO HAD BEEN ONLY A DEPUTY SECRETARY PRIOR TO YUAN'S FALL.

2. YUAN'S RELATIVELY SUDDEN FALL IS A SURPRISE. UNTIL RECENTLY, SHANTUNG'S TURNOUTS WERE FULL, AND ITS LEADERSHIP STABLE UNDER THE APPARENTLY FIRM CONTROL OF FIRST SECRETARY AND TSINAN MILITARY REGION COMMANDER YANG TE-CHIH. YANG, A MODERATE WHO HAS HELD HIS PLA COMMAND SINCE 1958, REPLACED LEFTIST REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WANG HSIAO-YU AS SHANTUNG BOSS WHEN THE PROVINCIAL CCP COMMITTEE WAS DRAWN UP IN APRIL 1971. YUAN, WANG'S SUCCESSOR AS THE MILITARY REGION'S TOP POLITICAL COMMISSAR, EMERGED AT THAT TIME AS SHANTUNG'S NEW NUMBER TWO.

3. YUAN'S EARLIER MILITARY SERVICE WAS UNDER LIN PIAO, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HIS CONNECTIONS TO THE LIN GROUP ACCOUNTED FOR BOTH HIS 1971 APPOINTMENT AND HIS RECENT FALL. BUT YUAN HAS BEEN WITH YANG IN SHANTUNG SINCE 1960, SO IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT YANG PICKED YUAN AS 2ND SECRETARY BECAUSE YANG KNEW HIM AND WANTED HIM. (YUAN WAS NOT THE ONLY LOCAL FIGURE ON SHANTUNG'S PARTY COMMITTEE. ALL OF YANG'S CCP SECRETARIES WORKED THERE PRIOR TO THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, GIVING SHANTUNG A DEGREE OF LOCAL CONTROL UNMATCHED BY ANY OTHER PRC PROVINCE.)

4. AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, YUAN'S PURGE--EVEN IF DESCRIBED AS ANTI-LIN PIAO--ALSO SEEMS ANTI-YANG TE-CHIH. VIEWED IN A LARGER CONTEXT, HOWEVER, THE PURGE EMERGES AS ONE MORE MOVE THE CENTER HAS TAKEN TO REDUCE THE INDEPENDENT POLITICAL AUTHORITY OF ITS MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS.

5. WHILE YANG IS THE FIRST OF THE SIX REGION COMMANDERS WHO ALSO HEAD PROVINCIAL PARTIES TO TAKE ON A CIVILIAN SECOND SECRETARY, FOUR OTHERS HAVE BEEN HIT IN VARIOUS WAYS (THREE HAVE

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LOST THE PLA MAJORITY IN THEIR PARTY COMMITTEES, AND ANOTHER, HSU SHIH-YU, IS NOW GREATLY OUTRANKED ON THE CCP POLITBURO BY STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER CHANG CHUN-CHIAO, HIS FIRST POLITICAL COMMISSAR). THE FIFTH, FUKIEN'S HAN HSIEN-CHU, HAS THUS FAR NOT PLACED LI CHIH-MIN, HIS NEW POLITICAL COMMISSAR, INTO THE SECOND SECRETARY SLOT OCCUPIED BY LI'S PURGED PLA PREDECESSOR. PERHAPS FUKIEN WILL NOW FOLLOW SHANTUNG'S LEAD AND APPOINT A CIVILIAN SECOND SECRETARY.

6. ANOTHER INDICATION THAT YUAN'S FALL SHOULD BE VIEWED IN THE LARGER, PLA-IN-POLITICS CONTEXT IS THE PARALLEL FATE OF TWO OTHER PROVINCIAL NUMBER TWO'S AT THE TENTH CONGRESS. KWANGSI'S WEI TSU-CHEN (OUT OF SIGHT SINCE FEBRUARY; WR 28) AND HONAN'S WANG HSIN (RANKED NINTH IN THE PROVINCE'S FULL MAY 1 TURNOUT; HONG KONG A-212) WERE ALSO REMOVED FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, A SIGNAL THAT THEY TOO HAVE BEEN PURGED. BOTH WERE PLA MEN. BY CONTRAST, NO INCUMBENT CIVILIAN PROVINCIAL CCP SECRETARIES LOST THEIR CENTRAL

COMMITTEE SEATS (NOR DID LOWER-RANKING PLA SECRETARIES).

7. YET WHILE YUAN'S FALL SEEMS IMPERSONAL AND PART OF A LARGER GAME, IT HAS APPARENTLY BEEN INTENSELY FELT IN SHANTUNG. YANG AND PAI ARE THE ONLY SECRETARIES TO HAVE APPEARED THERE SINCE JULY, WHEN THE BIG CHARACTER ATTACKS MAY HAVE BEGUN (THE PRO-KMT HONG KONG TIMES HAS CARRIED A JAPANESE-SOURCED STORY THAT SHANTUNG DEPUTY SECRETARY CHANG CHIU-HSIN, A PLA MAN, HAS BEEN ATTACKED IN THE POSTERS ALONG WITH YUAN). IN JULY, SHANTUNG PROMISED A WOMEN'S CONGRESS FOR LATE AUGUST (WR 28), BUT THAT CONGRESS HAS YET TO BE ANNOUNCED. THIS REPRESENTS AN UNUSUAL DEPARTURE FROM THE PATTERN; MASS ORGANIZATION CONGRESS ELSEWHERE HAVE ROUTINELY BEEN HELD ON THE DATES PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED FOR THEM IN ADVANCE. SHANTUNG'S LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS MAY STILL BE UNRESOLVED. OSBORN

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